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Message Text

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43
ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SAM-01 SAB-01 IO-14 AID-05

CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 /123 W
---------- 120382
P R 031730Z OCT 74
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5756
INFO SECDEF WASHDC
USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 7231

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, MORG, GR, TU
SUBJ: REASSURANCE AND REORIENTATION OF HELLENIC ARMED FORCES

REF: CHJUSMAGG 121500Z SEP 74
1. IN MY OCT. 2 MEETING WITH DEFMIN AVEROFF HE STATED THAT HE HAD JUST THAT MORNING SPOKEN TO AN ASSEMBLAGE OF HAF OFFICERS, ONE OF A SERIES OF SUCH MEETINGS WHICH HE HAD ADDRESSED IN RECENT WEEKS (SEE PARA 3C, REFTEL). HIS AIM WAS TO REASSURE THE OFFICERS THAT ALTHOUGH A VERY SMALL, PARANOIAC MINORITY AMONG THEM HAD BROUGHT DISCREDIT UPON THE HELLENIC ARMED FORCES, THE GOVERNMENT REALIZED THAT THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF OFFICERS SIMPLY PERFORMED THEIR DUTY DURING THE PERIOD OF MILITARY RULE, THAT IN THE CRISIS SITUATION THAT EXISTED THE PEOPLE OF GREECE NEEDED TO RESPECT THE ARMED FORCES, AND THROUGH THE REESTABLISHMENT OF THE CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT THIS IN FACT HAD COME ABOUT. AVEROFF SAID THAT HE HAD SPOKEN TO MORE THAN 3,000 OFFICERS SO FAR. HE FORESAW NO DIFFICULTY WITH ANY GROUP OF OFFICERS EXCEPT PERHAPS THE YOUNGER OFFICERS WHO HAD BEEN EDUCATED ("BRAIN-WASHED") DURING THE PERIOD OF MILITARY RULE. THEIR REEDUCATION WOULD NOT BE EASY NOR QUICK.

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2. AVEROFF ADMITTED WITH SOME TWINKLE OF HUMOR THAT THE

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MINORITY TO WHICH HE REFERRED WAS PERHAPS NOT SO SMALL AS
HE STATED IT. HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT'S OBJECTIVE WAS TO
RESTORE THE SELF-CONFIDENCE OF THE OFFICERS AND THEIR
CONFIDENCE IN THE CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT. AMONG OTHER THINGS, THIS
MEANT INFLICTING PUNISHMENT ON MINIMUM NUMBER OF OFFICERS
TO AVOID UNDERMINING MORALE OF OFFICER CORPS AS A WHOLE.

3. AVEROFF EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT GREECE WOULD HAVE
BEEN DEFEATED HAD IT GONE TO WAR WITH TURKEY ON JULY 21,
AS BG IOANNIDES HAD ADVOCATED. GREECE'S ARMED FORCES, HE
ADMITTED, WOULD HAVE EXPERIENCED DISSENSION FROM RESERVE
OFFICERS MOBILIZED BY THE MILITARY REGIME AND THE ARMED
FORCES WERE NOT AT THAT TIME HELD IN HIGH REPUTE BY THE
GREEK PEOPLE. MOREOVER, IOANNIDES INTENDED THAT THE
HELLENIC ARMY ATTACK ACROSS THE EVROS RIVER WITH THE UN-
REALISTIC OBJECTIVE, WHICH HAD BECOME A SLOGAN, OF CAPTURING
CONSTANTINOPLE WITHIN A WEEK. TO THEIR CREDIT, THE SENIOR
OFFICERS OF GREECE'S ARMED FORCES CORRECTLY CONCLUDED THAT
GREECE WOULD LOSE SUCH A WAR, AND THIS CONCLUSION LED TO
IOANNIDES' DOWNFALL AND THE REESTABLISHMENT OF
CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT.

4. AVEROFF BELIEVED THAT GREECE'S ARMED FORCES TODAY WERE
IN A FAR BETTER POSITION TO FIGHT A SUCCESSFUL WAR AGAINST
TURKEY IF THAT UNWELCOME TASK WERE FORCED UPON THEM. THEY
WOULD FIGHT A STRICTLY DEFENSIVE WAR IN THRACE AND HE WAS
CONVINCED THAT THE TURKISH ARMY COULD NOT NOW BREAK THROUGH
UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES. IN ADDITION, THE ISLAND DEFENSES
WERE IN MUCH BETTER CONDITION THAN PREVIOUSLY. HE BELIEVED
THAT THE TURKS COULD NOT TAKE ANY OF THE LARGER ISLANDS
AND ATTACKS ON SMALLER ISLANDS WOULD BE POINTLESS.
KUBISCH

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